

WHY NOT TEACH? A PERTINENT QUESTION ASKED BY ONE OF VIRGINIA'S TEACHERS

The Answer Reveals Conditions
Not Conducive to Proper
Progress.

TOO MUCH A STEPPING-STONE

Few Enter Profession Except as
Help to Something
Better.

Editor's Note.—The following interesting article along educational lines is from the pen of C. R. Warren, of Chatham, who writes from a fund of knowledge gleaned in a long experience as a teacher in the public schools:

Why not teach? This question is put to thousands of young men in this day. What is the young man's answer? Invariably he says: "There is no money in it." This is true, but well might the State or county ask: "Whose fault is it?" The answer to this is forthcoming also. There are very few men teaching to-day who are not receiving all they earn. The fact is, there is no profession in all the land so disreputable as the real, if only nominal, teaching of to-day. Especially is this true in our rural districts and small towns.

The majority of teachers in these places is made up of men and boys who are not through school, and are trying to get money to finish or else attempting to accumulate money to stake themselves until they are started in some other profession.

There is something in a boy that sprouts and calls for outlet in the spring just the same as there is in the seed that has lain dormant all the winter. How shall it sprout? Why can we not make it so interesting in the school-room that he will not hear the call of the forest, the birds and the squirrels? Every day we hear men say: "I can't keep my students interested in their work." The trouble is that those teachers are not interested themselves. "This old tale of the drunk man thinking that he is the only sober fellow in the crowd."

The profession of teaching appears at times to be a mere cesspool into which the cast-offs of every other occupation are hurled if they can stand examination on reading, writing and arithmetic as far as can be ascertained. The first fifteen Presidents of the United States and tell where the Mississippi River rises and sets. The young men are put in charge of the youth of America at the very period when it is most susceptible, at the very time when it is most impressionable, and the result is that the boy in whom there is the making of a good man is driven from the school in disgust and goes out to curse for the rest of his days the very institution that is intended to help him to good citizenship.

Now, the question arises as to how these men get into the schoolroom. Is the fault of the State partly and partly it is because such men are the only ones the people have to choose from. The State is to blame in regard to its laws concerning the election of trustees, directors, etc. As a rule the trustees are men who care but little what kind of teacher they get, and they have one. They are men who are usually good citizens, but know absolutely nothing of what it takes to make up an instructor, and they know as little of how a school should be conducted. If by any chance they get a really good man, and he departs from Mr. Smith's plan, or in any way varies from the old way, they refuse to support him, and finally run him out of the country. The man who is remembered only by the signal failure that he made in their midst. Then, what about the appointment or election of superintendents? There are superintendents all over the South to-day who will sit down by an applicant for a teacher's certificate and work out any hard problem that appears in the examination. They give an excuse for this: "She is a poor girl or a poor young man, and has to work so hard for a living." Now, the big-hearted, generous, unselfish man is the strength of our government, and the life of such a one is one continual sermon; but so often these kind feelings are misplaced, and in an attempt to be generous the examiner robs the children of our country of their rights. No examiner has a right to put an inefficient teacher in a community because he happens to sympathize with the teacher. When such is the case it is no wonder that day after day the future citizens of our land come to a dry fountain and with hungry mouths look up and are not fed.

Leaving the Country.
Is it any wonder that the rural districts are the poorest of the State? Is it any wonder that the children of the strong citizenship? What parent, poor or rich, is content, if he is ambitious for his children, to remain on a farm and intrust the intellectual development of those children to a man who is in no wise worthy of the trust? I am not saying that there are absolutely no teachers in the country.

HANDSOME SCHOOL BUILDING AT CLINTWOOD



CLINTWOOD, VA., March 27.—At the last session of the Legislature an appropriation of \$15,000 was made for the purpose of establishing a number of normal training schools in different parts of the State. One of these training schools has been inaugurated at Clintwood, and it is now being conducted in the new \$15,000 school building. The training department has been placed under the charge of Professor M. A. Remine, and he now has a class of seventy-five pupils.

But most of the good ones in these places are trying to get to town. Ask the man who moves into town from a good farm why he came and always the answer is the same: "I came to educate my children." There is an other result that is very noticeable that comes directly from this lack of good, strong teachers in the country. "This the marrying of the young people. I believe the average age of marrying for young women in the country is from seventeen to twenty-one years, of young men from nineteen to twenty-three; for young women in town it is from twenty-one to twenty-five, and for young men from twenty-eight to thirty-five. Now, this is very significant when we consider the results. In the first place, the average young man is not fit for the responsibilities of life, and certainly not the responsibility of a family, before he is twenty-five or thirty years old. In the next place, the offspring of the very young couple is weak, both physically and mentally. Thus the race is impaired, and insofar as the country suffers, it is not for nothing that the country suffers.

The young people themselves are to blame for this in part only, the parents in part and the State a good deal. If some man had touched the young gallant's life with a live coal from off the altar of ambition he would not be driving the old family horse to death on a stormy night, trying to get home from a visit to his sweetheart. He would be at home with a book preparing himself for a useful life and acting as stay and comfort to the declining years of his parents.

Different Conditions.
Now, it is true that the best men in our country came from the rural districts; but when these men were growing up things were different. The school-teacher in those days went by the old rule of "spare the rod and spoil the child," and he was usually such a man as would spoil the father's face if he interfered; but the father did not interfere, for he also was wise. To-day it is different. The teacher had rather plead than command, and he dare not do more, or he would have a visit from the old man, at which meeting he does not care to be present. He is cursed and slandered and often persecuted because he dares object to some bully breaking up the school.

And the State punishes him, when it would have been better for the country, better for the boy, better for the school, if he had whipped the offender within an inch of his life, instead of leaving a few blue marks on his back. Now comes the question, is there a possible, practical remedy? In my opinion, there certainly is.

The first thing that is to be considered is the getting of better men. This can be done if teaching is raised to the dignified plane of a profession, and not allowed to be looked upon as a field in which a man may labor for a short while until he has time to look about for more lucrative employment. Why not make the examination so rigid that a man will have to prepare for it in the same way that he prepares for medicine, law, etc. Where is the man who has ever made a stepping-stone to some other profession? It is so easy to be a teacher that very few ambitious men think it worth their while to aspire to life in that work.

Yes, it is easy to be a teacher—that is, to be one in name—but how many of us are real teachers? The energetic man is looking for something hard to do. Who will blame him when he tries in disgust to throw those things that are so easy apparently to accomplish? Only those remain in this work who have too little energy to try for what they consider higher planes and broader fields of labor.

The Remedy.
Now, how may this reformation be brought about? Why can not univer-

sities and colleges put in a chair for this course and push it as other professions are pushed? Some institutions are already doing this. Trinity College, which we are proud to call our alma mater, has such a chair. Why can not others do so? And why can't the State require the young teacher to present his diploma from that? Require something of a man, and you will get something better. He will be a thinker, and men will work for it just to win the premium, if for nothing else.

We think these suggestions, followed out, would get prepared men to teach our schools. But this is not all. They get lazy. That is true. Is there any other business in the world in which a man engages that when he starts his work allows himself to sit down and allows the business to run itself? Here is a man that goes into a community to teach school, signs his contract to teach for \$75 a month for eight months.

The first month he, with his assistants, have sixty pupils; the next month fifty-five; the third fifty, and so on until by the close they have ten, perhaps twenty, and they make no effort whatever to prevent this falling off, but congratulate themselves that their pay goes on just the same. Now, why not arrange a scale and allow him so much per pupil, and when his school falls off let his pay fall off in proportion, and you would see him pushing his business just as other men push theirs. I know, as every other teacher knows, that this falling off in schools in the spring is more the fault of the teacher than any one else. If this is not true, why do the private schools flourish all the year and the public school just across the street falls to pieces.

The first thing I would suggest to the teacher who wants to push his school is to make his pay fall off. He may revolt at first, but make him work. Don't be afraid of driving him out. He won't go if he is the kind you need. The boy who is at work never leaves school. He always quits work, gets discouraged and then leaves. When the parents interfere and talk them out, they think that the store, the farm or anything else must go to ruin. If necessary, to keep the boy in school, it can be done. I have seen it done. I have done it myself. We must remember that the father is more ambitious for the boy than we are, and as long as he believes that his son is doing well in school he is going to let him stay and work a little harder himself, and his mother is going to encourage a little more to keep him there, unless it comes to a proposition of bread, which is very seldom.

Work the Solution.
Then the problem is almost solved by a working school, and the greatest inspiration a boy has to work is a working teacher. I think the worst thing that was ever put in a school room is a chair for the teacher. If every one of them were burned we would have better schools. It is pretty certain that if a teacher lounges and lolls in the schoolroom the boy will do the same.

Now a word to the graduate who in a few months will be looking out to choose his work. No doubt you have heard much about the serviceable life in the last four years, and a great deal of the successful life. One can not go without the other. In fact, one means the other. The only great and successful life is the serviceable one. The home economics courses were in two agricultural courses, one in elementary agriculture, and one in agriculture for high schools. In each course one hour a day was devoted to work in the classroom, and an average of one hour a day outside of the classroom in demonstrations, field trips, etc.

"On registration day there were two students who classified in home economics courses, but before the close of the Summer School a total of sixty-seven students were taking the work. The home economics courses included both cooking and sewing for teachers in public schools and it was carried on with such limited equipment as might be supplied at small expense in almost any school. There was also organized a class of over forty housekeepers of Charlottesville, who attended lectures and demonstrations arranged especially for them. This class was continued for two weeks.

In addition to the courses in agriculture and home economics there was a course in nature study, conducted by Professor Davis, and a course in school gardening, conducted by Miss Margaret King. The latter course in-

cluded daily practical lessons in school gardening.

"One of the most striking features of the summer school was the rural life week, during which there were numerous addresses, stereopticon lectures and demonstrations by men capable of discussing the various problems of rural life in general, and rural school problems in particular. Among the instructors and lecturers during the week were E. C. Bishop, State Superintendent of Public Instruction in Nebraska; O. J. Kern, County Superintendent of Schools in Winnebago county, Ill.; Dr. S. A. Knapp, of this department; Hon. J. D. Eggleston,

State Superintendent of Public Instruction in Virginia; T. O. Sandy, of Virginia; Dr. S. C. Mitchell, of Richmond College; E. W. Magruder, State Chemist of Virginia; S. W. Fletcher, director of the Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station, and others."

Dean Davis and Miss Charlton will give courses in agriculture, nature study, cooking and sewing at the University Summer School again this year, their courses counting toward the Virginia teachers' certificate. Their past success at the summer school, together with their exceptional ability and pleasing personality, will guarantee a large class this summer.

Schools in Good Shape.
[Special to The Times-Dispatch.]
BUCHANAN, VA., March 27.—At a recent meeting of the County School Board, at Fincastle, a resolution was adopted to the effect that a superintendent would be employed for his whole time at a salary of \$1,100 per annum. The board passed a resolution endorsing Colonel Cary Brackinridge, the present superintendent, and unanimously recommended his reappointment by the State Board of Education. The financial condition of the board was reported as very satisfactory and all of the county schools are in a most flourishing condition.

GOOD WORDS FOR
SUMMER SCHOOL
Complimentary Statement Will
Appear in Report of U. S. Department of Agriculture.

The following statement, complimentary to the work done at the University of Virginia's Summer School last summer, will appear in the forthcoming report of the United States Department of Agriculture:

"At the Summer School of the University of Virginia courses in home economics were offered for the first time, and in agriculture for the second time. The home economics courses were in charge of Miss Edith Charlton, of the Iowa State College, and the agricultural course in charge of K. C. Davis, dean of the School of Agriculture at St. Lawrence University. Seventy-eight teachers were enrolled in two agricultural courses, one in elementary agriculture, and one in agriculture for high schools. In each course one hour a day was devoted to work in the classroom, and an average of one hour a day outside of the classroom in demonstrations, field trips, etc.

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New, Used and Slightly Damaged Pianos Going at
Prices Lower Than Ever Before Offered, and They
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Seekers of economy note: This great spring sale offers you an opportunity to obtain thoroughly good Pianos at prices far below those asked for instruments of equal quality elsewhere. The best guarantee on a used Piano is the name of the seller. We give you our word that these Pianos are remarkable for their exceptionally fine condition. It is a matter of important self-interest for intending Piano purchasers to visit CRAFTS' NOW.

Upright Pianos, 7½ Octave, as Low as \$95
Weekly Payments If You Wish, \$1.50 and Up.

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In perfect condition. Mahogany case. Cannot be told from new. If you want this make player, see this one.

Pay Monthly Our Price is \$345

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Upright Piano, 71-3 octaves; overstrung bass; in perfect condition. Mahogany case. Stool and scarf. Some dealers get \$400 for this make.

Pay Monthly Our Price is \$247

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\$10 CASH, \$7 MONTHLY.—We have them in walnut, oak and mahogany, one of the most popular of this well-known make. They are adopted by the tone and action very pleasing. They're \$300 value.

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HAMPDEN-SIDNEY DRAMATIC CLUB



HAMPDEN-SIDNEY, VA., March 27.—The Hampden-Sidney Dramatic Club will start on its tour next week. The manager, George W. Diehl, has arranged the schedule, which is as follows: Farmville, April 1; Petersburg, April 2; and Blackstone, April 3. In the cast there are three Richmond boys, James Cecil, James E. Smith and Wyndham Blanton. Besides the cast consists of H. Brown, Henry L. Painter, George Richardson and W. S. Beard.